
*The Department of the Treasury
Office of Inspector General*

Report Title

TRADE PROCESSING: The HAZMAT Program at the Port of Houston Needs to be Strengthened (OIG-03-049; issued January 22, 2003) (Limited Official Use)

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Synopsis

This audit was the second in a series of planned audits on the United States Customs Service (Customs) hazardous materials (HAZMAT) Program. The objective of these audits is to determine whether Customs has sufficient processes in place to ensure the safe and legal transport and inspection of cargo containing hazardous materials.

A hazardous material is a substance or material that has been determined by the Secretary of Transportation to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety and property. Customs developed the HAZMAT Handbook to provide safe, uniform, and environmentally sound procedures for processing this type of cargo, and to ensure compliance with all statutes and regulations pertaining to hazardous materials.

Our report provided four recommendations to strengthen the HAZMAT Program at the Port of Houston.

Customs was divested from the Department of the Treasury to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in March 2003 pursuant to the Homeland Security Act of 2002. Accordingly, audit follow-up is the responsibility of DHS management.